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G. A. M. WOOD

Sir Walter Scott and Sir Ralph Sadler: A Chapter in Literary History

This article concludes a series dealing with Sir Walter Scott's role in the editing and publication of *The State Papers of Sir Ralph Sadler*, Edinburgh 1809. The three previous sections appeared in Volume VII of *Studies in Scottish Literature*, Numbers 1 & 2, 11-20, Number 3, 147-158, and Number 4, 229-237. The present section will be concerned with the delayed publication of *Sadler*, the nature of some of its copy text, Scott's "Memoir of the Life of Sir Ralph Sadler," and the reception given to the volumes by contemporary reviewers.

Although the first known reference to the work in Scott's letters is in the early autumn of 1806,¹ *Sadler* must have been projected some months earlier, for a letter from Archibald Constable the publisher to his antiquarian friend, George Chalmers, dated 4 June 1806, gives an account of Cliffords' Sadler manuscripts. Constable continues:

We have got leave to publish either the whole or part, and for that purpose they are now in the hands of Mr. Walter Scott, from whom we expect a valuable selection, to make (perhaps) two respectable quarto volumes, to be printed by Ballantyne,—²

Scott seems to have worked on the papers during that autumn, for a letter from Archibald Constable & Co. to John Murray, one of the London publishers of *Sadler*, dated 28 November 1806, states:

We enclose a memorandum of some books that Mr. Walter Scott wants for the Sadler Papers, which you will be so good as procure for us with your earliest convenience. This will make one of the most curious works that has ever been published, and cannot fail to be successful.³

Constable's letter adds some interesting details about the business arrangements of the book; Scott, as editor was to be paid "at least 100 guineas." Constable's optimism over *Sadler* continued, for in December 1807 we find him writing to John Murray, "Sir Ralph Sadler is going

1. SSL, VII, 14 ff.

2. Thomas Constable, *Archibald Constable and his Literary Correspondents* (Edinburgh, 1873) I, 420.

3. Constable, I, 356-7.

forward very well. The Royal copies, owing to the thickness of the paper, will make three volumes."⁴

Sadler was publicly advertised during the autumn of 1807, for on 3 December 1807 James Brown of St. Albans wrote to Cadell and Davies: "I observe attached to Magazine & Reviews Advertisements of Sir Ralph Sadleir's State Papers, at the bottom of which your Names appear as one of the London Publishers."⁵

The book was later announced to the public in a footnote to *Marmion*, with the phrase "shortly to be published."⁶ As *Marmion* was issued on 23 February 1808, it can be assumed that it was intended to publish *Sadler* during the spring of that year, but as frequently happens with antiquarian matters, printing and publication took far longer than was originally expected. Scott's first hint of delay came in one of his many letters to Surtees in the spring of 1808. "—The necessity of diligently comparing each sheet of Sadler's Letters with the original (though, thank God, that labour I have no concern with), and the press of business at my friend Ballantyne the printer's, has occasioned some delay in that work. I am not yet arrived so far as to profit by your kind annotations—" ⁷ Proofreading would have been the task of Scott's amanuenses.

When writing to William Hayley on 14 August [1808] [N.L.S. MS ACC 5392] Scott admitted that he was delaying work on *Sadler* until his return to Edinburgh in November, and early in the following year, the book was still reported to be approaching completion. As Scott wrote to Constable on 22 January 1809, "Sadler will now be soon out when we will have a settlement of our accompts. I have employed Mr. Weber to make some transcripts from the Charters etc. of which no copies were furnished to me."⁸

Letter XII (*S.S.L.*, Vol. VII, 232-3) tells us that although Scott's biographical "Memoir of Sir Ralph" was in proof by mid April 1809, the index was still to be sent to the press. Indeed, the situation during the early months of 1809 was very unfavourable. Ballantyne, as always, was pressed with printing work, and he was short of staff. As he complained to Constable in a letter dated 27 February 1809. "By the establishment of three additional Newspapers in Edinburgh, we have lost, during the last few months, not fewer than 10 compositors."⁹ Even the

4. Constable, I, 378.

5. NLS. MS 3876 f132.

6. See *SSL*, VII, 147, footnote 2.

7. *Letters*, II, 20, dated 20 February 1808.

8. *Letters*, II, 155.

9. NLS. MS ACC 5187, f41.

situation with the publisher was unencouraging. Scott and Constable had differed over *Swift* and the politics of the *Edinburgh Review*, and the continuing differences led to Scott terminating for some years his connection with the firm of Constable. *Sadler* was published after the break.

By good fortune, the bound Ballantyne volume of the Constable Letterbooks has recently been acquired by the National Library of Scotland. A number of the items from James Ballantyne & Co. concern Sadler, and supply still more reasons for its tardy publication. In an ALS from James Ballantyne to Constable & Co., dated 27 February 1809, we read:

I wish it were in my power to give you any certain information respecting the completion of Sadler's State Papers. All the copy we have is now in the hands of the Compositors, and will be printed off in the course of the week: But Mr Scott informs me, that some Genealogical Tables are yet to be furnished by Mr Clifford; and I have not received any copy for the Life.¹⁰

After Scott's "Memoir of Sadler" had been returned to him by Arthur Clifford, it was set up in type as quickly as possible, for there is a letter from James Ballantyne & Co. to Archibald Constable & Co., written from Edinburgh, 18 April 1809, concerning the proof reading of *Sadler*.¹¹ It is worth printing in full, as it tells us more about the way in which Scott had taken over the responsibilities of editorship, but without involving himself in its customary labours. Scott was in London from 10 April to 15 June 1809, in connection with the work of the Commission on the Administration of Justice in Scotland, of which he was Secretary, and his absence from Edinburgh was an additional hindrance to progress on *Sadler*.

Gentlemen,—

Mr Scott's instructions were, that the Memoir of Sadler should be corrected here by Mr Clifford & Mr Weber. Two sheets will be sent to these gentlemen tomorrow; and afterwards, the work shall proceed with all the dispatch we can possibly give it.

We beg to mention the probability of some delay being likely to arise from the title-page not being furnished. I have spoken of it oftener than once to Mr Scott, but it has not yet been sent. I wrote to my brother this day, to desire he would request Mr Scott to send it from London.

We are, Gentlemen,
Your Most Obedient Servants,
James Ballantyne & Co.

A further letter from James Ballantyne & Co. to Archibald Con-

10. NLS. MS ACC 5187, f42.

11. NLS. MS ACC 5187, f43, 44.

stable & Co., written from Edinburgh on 3 May 1809 is devoted to *Sadler*.¹²

Gentlemen,

We have received the whole of the Memoir of Sadler's Life, and of the Index; and being now supplied with the Title-page, Advertisement, and Dedication, we believe all the copy is in our hands. The whole will be sent to Mr Scott, in proof, by the end of this week; and it will be pushed through the presses as speedily as possible after being returned by him.

But we think it necessary to mention a circumstance, respecting which we have spoken both to Mr Scott and Mr Weber, and which, till it is rectified, must stop the publication. It is this.

When Sheet F. of the first Volume was sent to Mr Scott, he returned it with an order that the following sheet, G, should not be worked; but that the 8 pages of which it consisted, should be left blank (to be afterwards filled up by him) and that Sheet H should go on accordingly. This was done; but Mr Scott has never yet supplied the copy for the blank space. We have already spoken of it to him—indeed oftener than once; but you will judge whether it might not be as well for Mr Constable to speak to him, both being in London.

In so far as the publication depends upon our exertions, you may positively rely on the work being ready by the end of the present month. We are well aware of the importance of this, and shall use every effort not to disappoint you.

We are, Gentlemen,

Your Most Obedient Servants,
James Ballantyne & Co

The circumstances of the missing Sheet are curious. In both the two and three volume editions of *Sadler*, gathering G of Volume I occupies pp. 49-56. Page 49 has the ending of a letter from Sadler to the Privy Council, and merely concludes a section of material carried over from the previous gathering. Pages 50-56, however, reprint, from the British Museum manuscript Cotton Caligula B I f52-70, the instructions which Sir Ralph Sadler received from the King, when he was sent to Scotland with royal dispatches in 1541. This item, in fact relates to *Letter 1* of the present series of articles, for Scott wrote to Sir Henry Ellis on 5 October 1807, requesting that Cotton Caligula B I f52-70 should be copied out and sent to him, in a form suitable for publication.¹³ Why the transcription took so long remains a mystery, but it had the effect that one of the earliest gatherings in the book as bound up for sale was nevertheless the last to be printed, for James Ballantyne wrote to Archibald Constable & Co. from Edinburgh

12. NLS. MS ACC 5187, f45.

13. SSL, VII, 15-16.

on 13 May 1809 that "the WHOLE of Sadler, including title &c is in the hands of M^r Scott; and that now nothing remains but to supply the deficient sheet in Vol. I to complete the work."¹⁴ Printing was completed by late summer, for Scott told Surtees in a letter of 17 September 1809, "—Sadler is at length out of the printer's hands."¹⁵ The order for presentation copies was given to Constable at the end of October 1809,¹⁶ and the book was announced in the *Edinburgh Review* Quarterly list of New Publications during the same month.¹⁷ *Sadler* was available in two sizes, either in two volumes, demy quarto at five guineas, or in three volumes, royal quarto, at eight guineas.¹⁸

Even by the standards of the time, *Sadler* was a monstrously expensive book, and every effort was made to see that the purchasers would, at least, get a lot of paper for their money. Both states of *Sadler* offer 1402 pages of main text and 46 of preliminaries, including the 39 pages of Scott's biographical "Memoir" in Volume I. Not all the texts consists of Clifford family papers, for I, 3-351 are taken from a different source, to be discussed later, and at least a third of Volume II has little or nothing to do with Sir Ralph Sadler, *Sadler*, in fact, was a rag bag compilation; its purchasers bought a barely digested mass of state papers, inefficiently arranged; plus a poor reprint of two older volumes, though they were not informed that such was the case, and a mass of appendices, of interest only to the descendants of Sir Ralph, many of whom were already being sent free copies.

Scott's Biographical Memoir

Although Lockhart glossed over the reception accorded to *Sadler*, he felt no need to ignore Scott's Memoir. He described it as "—written with all that lively solicitude about points of antiquarian detail, which accompanied him through so many tasks less attractive than the personal career of a distinguished statesman intimately connected with the fortunes of Mary Queen of Scots."¹⁹ Scott wrote easily on historical

14. NLS. MS ACC 5187, f46, 47.

15. *Letters*, II, 245.

16. *Letters*, II, 266.

17. *Edinburgh Review* (October 1809) XV, 238.

18. The three volume "edition" of *Sadler*, on large paper, is relatively rare. The text has not been reset, but page numbers, after Vol. I, have of course been changed. There is a different table of contents for each volume and the index has been amended. New title pages were printed for all three volumes. In the copy which I have examined, Signet Library, Edinburgh, the plate of the monument at Standon, facing II, 619, in the two volume edition, is the frontispiece to Volume II, though with its error of "Herefordshire" for "Hertfordshire" uncorrected. The plates of facsimile signatures, Vol. II, Appendix II, have been inserted upside down.

19. Lockhart, II, 265.

subjects, and the pages read pleasantly, though they are not memorable. Scott outlines Sadler's life though his mistaken assumptions concerning Sir Ralph's parents have already been considered.²⁰ The Memoir is filled out with anecdotes, and has been copiously footnoted with citations from standard histories. Scott was a fairer historian in his novels than in his historical writings, and the Memoir shows a strong bias against Queen Elizabeth;—"In 1568, when Elizabeth had determined to treat a fugitive princess, who had fled to her for protection, as an accused criminal—" ²¹ Scott's typical facetiousness comes through an amusing footnote, parodying the heavy obviousness of antiquarians.²²

The notes to the main series of Letters and State Papers are uneven, being most copious when concerned with the Scottish Reformation. They explain points of historical and genealogical interest, identify names mentioned and explain some major obscurities in the text. They are nowhere as complete and interesting as Scott's splendidly readable and informative annotation in his edition of *Dryden* or his literary-historical gleanings in *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. Only the succinct historical introductions to the various sections of *Sadler* are worthy of their author.

Some problems of copy text.

Sadler purports to print the Tixall manuscripts, and for these Scott was dependent on Arthur Clifford, who left the copying to John Kirk. The body of the book presumably follows Kirk's arrangement; under each section of a historical period there is a succession of not wholly related letters and documents, some not even by Sadler, but supposedly illustrating the matter of his own letters. There was little Scott could do to check Kirk's transcript, and his amanuenses botched the proof-reading.

Much of *Sadler*, however, was taken from outside sources, and in the cavalier treatment of this material, we gain an insight into the lax editorial standards of the time.

Sadler, I, 3-351, the section on the embassies to Scotland between 1539 and 1543, was not based upon the Tixall papers. As we have seen, pp. 50-56 reprint a section of another manuscript. In the letter to Surtees in which he outlined the plan of the book, Scott admitted that he was reprinting the negotiations concerning the proposed marriage of Queen Mary with Edward VI. "These you are doubtless no stranger to, as they are contained in a small 8vo. volume published

20. SSL, VII, 18-19.

21. *Sadler*, I, xxvi.

22. *Sadler*, I, v.

about the beginning of the last century." ²³ *Sadler* itself makes a rather different claim, stating in the small type of its *Advertisement*, "The transcript, from which the first part of the work is now reprinted, is in the Library of the Honourable Faculty of Advocates in Edinburgh, but the originals, of which it is a copy, appear to be lost." ²⁴ Were Vol. I, pp. 3-49 and 57-351 of *Sadler* taken from a manuscript or a printed source? The NLS MS. *Catalogue of Advocate's Manuscripts, Historical Catalogue* is in no doubt, for its entry of the relevant manuscript, 33.3.10. (A.2.21), p. 30 is as follows:

This book contains the Instructions given by King Henry the Eighth of England, to Raulf Sadler his Ambassador in Scotland, with his Letters of State, during his Negotiations their [*sic*] in Anno 1539 et 1543.

Folio contains as numberd 314 pages, including several blank leaves in different parts of th[e] volume. These "Letters and Negotiations of Sir Ralph Sadler" were published at Edinburgh 1720, 8vo; [*Letters and Negotiations of Sir Ralph Sadler, ambassador of King Henry VIII. to Scotland*. J. McEuen and G. Steuart, 1720.] and are incorporated as the first portion in th[e] larger edition of the same collection, Edinb. 1809, 2 vo's. 4to [*Sadler*]-th[e] text being taken from this MS. as "the Originals of which it is a copy, appear to be lost." The manuscript was probably made in th[e] latter part of th[e] 16th Century.

Unfortunately, *Sadler* prints not the manuscript, but the 1720 octavo, which is itself a less than perfect copy of the manuscript. The 1720 printed text has conventions of punctuation and italisation not followed in *Sadler*, which has modernised the accidentals of the text, but *Sadler* repeats its spelling in almost every instance, including its expansions, and faithfully copies its peculiarities of reproducing proper names, such as "Cassis," "Somervail," or "Maxwel." ²⁵ A few collations will be helpful.

a.

NLS Ad. MS. 33.3.10.f56 and speciallye Niddesdaill
1720 8vo. p. 236. and especially Nithsdale
Sadler, I, 194. and especially Nithsdale

b.

NLS Ad. MS. 33.3.10. p. 10 from the Cardinall to his Agent At
Rome. 16. November. 1539.
1720 8vo. p. 15. A Letter from Cardinal Bethune to Mr. Andrew

23. *Letters*, I, 364.

24. *Sadler*, I, [5].

25. *Sadler*, I, 69.

Oliphant *Vicar of Foulis and Innertig, his Agent at Rome*, 16th November, 1539.

Sadler, I, 13. A Letter from Cardinal Bethune to Mr. Andrew Oliphant, *Vicar of Foulis and Innertig, his agent at Rome*, 16th November, 1539.

Why *Sadler* should have carried out this deception is not clear. Perhaps as it was advertised as a collection of important new historical manuscript material, it was thought that purchasers would object to finding that the very first items were merely reprinted from an older book. Indeed, there is some attempt at deception, for *Sadler*, I, 136 fn, has, explaining a lacuna in the text "*Here the copy wes rottin and consumed*—Marginal note on MS. in Advocates' Library." This is the marginal note on MS 33.3.10, but the italicised phrase was printed, with the spelling "rotten" in the 1720 octavo, p. 158. Several explanatory introductions and annotations were added to this section of *Sadler*, and one document was rearranged in the interest of chronological clarity,²⁶ but, apart from the short insert from a Cotton MS, already considered, *Sadler*, I, 3-351 is a reprint of pp. 1-448 of the 1720 octavo.

The *Edinburgh Review* in its condemnation of *Sadler*, points out another omission of the book to give a true account of itself. "—to look only at the book, one would certainly suppose that [the letters] were all published for the first time. The truth is, however that ten or twelve of the longest and most important were printed long ago, in the Appendix to Keith's History. The suppression of this fact we conceive to be a very culpable omission on the part of the editor: and, to show in how slovenly a way this expensive book has been prepared for the public, we may mention, that a note of Bishop Keith's, to one of these papers, is preposterously retained, and appears in the shape of an inexplicable note by the present editor."²⁷

In this case, however, the *Edinburgh Review* was a little unfair. Copies of historical documents tend to proliferate, and versions of the same item can be found in several manuscript collections. The National Library of Scotland, for example, has, among the Swinton MSS., an eighteenth century transcript of MS.33.3.10.²⁸ Many of the papers in Bishop Robert Keith's *The History of the Affairs of Church and State in Scotland*, Edinburgh, 1734, appear in *Sadler*, but in a markedly better text, for *Sadler* was using the originals, whilst Keith relied on other

26. 1720, pp. XIX-XXV appear, not in the prefatory material, but as *Sadler* I, 59-63, so that all documents relating to 1543 can be read in sequence.

27. *Edinburgh Review* (August 1810), XVI, 464.

28. NLS. Advocates' MS 31.2.20.

copies. Scott's omission was to tell his readers that the papers had been printed before.

However, three items have been taken from Keith's *History* without acknowledgement. 1) Keith, Vol. I. Appendix. Book I, 23-24, "Memorial of Certain Points—," is printed in *Sadler*, I, 375-7. 2) Keith, Vol. I. Appendix. Book I, 24-28, "A short Discussion of the weighty matter—" is printed in *Sadler*, I, 377-83. Scott takes over, without acknowledgement, Keith's note, p. 26, as to the identification of a gentlewoman as "Elizabeth Sands", *Sadler* I, 380, and a long note, p. 28, as to the difference in the texts between the Cotton manuscript and that published by Burnet. This is the note mocked by the *Edinburgh Review*. 3) Keith, Vol. I. Appendix. Book I, 38, "Knox's Letter to Mr. Railton.", is printed in *Sadler*, I, 680-2.

In addition there are various documents in Keith's *History* which are not reprinted, but which would have cleared up various confusions in *Sadler*, if they had been included.

The hapless purchasers of *Sadler*, had they read the *Edinburgh Review*, would have found their attention drawn to yet another confusion in the copy text.

—we find 120 quarto pages reprinted from an old and not very rare treatise "on the estate of the English fugitives under the King of Spain", and this enormous and most irrelevant appendix is introduced without one syllable of explanation. We searched in vain for something which might account for its intrusion, until we discovered that the Earl of Westmorland's name is mention'd in it, among other fugitives, in the service of the King of Spain. But, truly, this mode of larding one book with another, when they both happen to mention the same person's name, is something quite new, even in the present advanced state of the book-making art; and exemplifies a recipe for swelling out a volume, infinitely more efficacious than any hitherto discovered by the most skilful manufacturers of the metropolis.²⁹

The volume thus introduced for the purpose of swelling out *Sadler* is Sir Lewis Lewkenor, *The Estate of English Fugitives—*, London, 1596 (STC. 15565.) It is printed in *Sadler*, II, "Appendix to the Northern Insurrection," No. III, 208-330, without any note of the author, or place, or date of publication. The revised and amended edition of Lewkenor's book was used, rather than the original 1595 edition, perhaps because it was the only one in the Advocates' Library. The standard of the reprint is poor, and its reproduction of the original spelling is especially capricious.

29. *Edinburgh Review* (August 1810), XVI, 475.

The reviews

Sadler was given a very mixed reception by the reviewers. Some ignored it altogether, others, such as *The Scots Magazine*, merely reprinted large sections,³⁰ the *Quarterly Review* was partially favourable and the *Edinburgh Review*, as the extracts quoted make clear, gave the book the treatment it unfortunately deserved.

The *Quarterly Review*³¹ praised Scott's biographical "Memoir," but pointed out that the standard of editing was questionable: "—The papers have been very carelessly copied, and the editors have not corrected the mistakes of the transcriber. The errors of inadvertency and misreading, especially in the second volume, are far too numerous to be here particularised."³² In particular, the reviewer lamented the paucity of informative footnotes: "Sir Ralph Sadleir's [*sic*] papers relate chiefly to Scotland, and the treasure of universal knowledge concerning that country possessed by Mr. Scott enables him to disclose to us a thousand curiosities which he has withheld."³³

The reviewer's praise of his "Memoir" should have pleased Scott, had he not already seen it. Wilfred Partington prints part of a letter from William Gifford, editor of the *Quarterly Review*, to Scott, written on 30 April 1810. "I have taken the liberty of sending you a review of Sir R. Sadler [by Edmund Lodge]: if you will have the goodness to look at it, you will oblige me very much. A touch or two from your hand (for I am not conversant with the subject) will be of most use to the article."³⁴ Scott's reply to Gifford is not known; his correspondence with Gifford is one of the most obvious incomplete ones in the *Letters*.

The *Edinburgh Review*, on the other hand, said what it felt.³⁵ The reviewer was most probably Macvey Napier,³⁶ and he wrote a typically "quizzing" article, taking Clifford and Scott to task for padding out *Sadler* with spurious appendices. The tone of the review is very similar to the one Scott himself had written on Godwin's *Life of Chaucer*, where Godwin was censured for his prolixities and super-

30. *The Scots Magazine* (June 1810 and July 1810), LXII, 428-434, and 503-509.

31. *Quarterly Review* (November 1810), IV, 403-414.

32. *Quarterly Review* (November 1810), IV, 414.

33. *Quarterly Review* (November 1810), IV, 404.

34. Wilfred Partington, *Sir Walter's Post-Bag* (London, 1932), p. 60.

35. *Edinburgh Review* (August 1810), XVI, 447-464.

36. J. C. Corson, *A Bibliography of Sir Walter Scott* (Edinburgh, 1943), p. 307.

fluities.³⁷ Another reason for calling attention to *Sadler's* defects was the displeasure still felt by *Edinburgh Review* over Scott's part in helping to found its rival, the *Quarterly Review*, in 1809.

Sadler was condemned, as the passages already quoted have shown, for its inaccuracies and its omissions. The review felt that much of the material presented was irrelevant, and Scott's introduction and notes were censured. "If Mr. Scott will condescend to write notes to old state papers, we wish he would condescend to acquire the accuracy which constitutes the whole merit of that humble species of writing. We have here plenty of heraldic and genealogical learning; but little of a proper historical nature that is remarkable for correctness;—" ³⁸ The review also found errors in Scott's biographical memoir and objected to inferences about the Reformation made by him, and to a prejudice against Knox. Its conclusion was magestical;—"—we would willingly give up two inches of the margin to have the text arranged in a more business-like, and printed in a more scholar-like manner; and, since the thing cannot now be helped otherwise, shall be glad to exchange the fine plates at the beginning of the volumes, for a full table of *errata* at the end." ³⁹

The trouble with *Sadler* was that no one took final responsibility. Clifford left all the arduous work to Scott, and Scott having assembled footnotes in the leisure moments of an exceptionally busy period of his life,⁴⁰ left much of the drudgery to his amanuenses. Even if his helpers were willing, they were less than capable. Henry Weber became insane in 1813, while Scott wrote later of Nelson, "He left his situation of amanuensis to go into Lord Home's militia regiment, but his dissipated habits got the better of a strong constitution, and he fell into bad habits and poverty, and died, I believe, in the Hospital at Liverpool."⁴¹

A fitting final comment on *Sadler* is in a letter to Scott from James Ballantyne, written on 15 September 1810, after reading the attack in the *Edinburgh Review*, and urging Scott, in vain, to allow him to give up Clifford's next book, *Tixall Poetry*:

The review of *Sadler* has thrown a heavy cloud over the *Aston Speculation*. In fact, it seems to me to have ruin'd it. Here is the same editor, the same printer, and your name withdrawn. As to myself, I must, with all modesty, protest that the typographical errors are not of mine. Often did I lament that the care of read-

37. Reprinted in Scott, *Miscellaneous Prose Works* (Edinburgh, 1835), XVII, 55-80.

38. *Edinburgh Review* (August 1810), XVI, 462.

39. *Edinburgh Review* (August 1810), XVI, 464.

40. See *Letters*, II, 305.

41. *Journal*, p. 129.

ing the proofs was committed to such men as Weber and Nelson, who, even if equal to the task, seemed to feel no interest or responsibility; and nor did I struggle to make up, by my own labour, for the apparent want of it in them. But I do not pretend to be versed in ancient language, and dare not be responsible for more than the printer's task—adhering as closely as possible to the copy. I read over, this day, the extract from Haynes, in which the reviewer says there are three errors⁴²; and my eye, or judgement, was unable to detect one. If there be an error in Beaumont & Fletcher, or in Swift, to these I shall plead guilty; but Somers and Sadler are not equal objects of confidence. I employ as careful a first reader as I can get; I read the sheets finally myself as assiduously as I can; I pledge myself for seeing every alteration or correction carefully made; but I cannot do more.⁴³

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42. *Edinburgh Review* (August 1810), XVI, 461.

43. NLS MS. 3879 ff 189-190. Noted on the first page of the letter, by James Ballantyne, is the comment: "This was written before the receipt of yours, respecting the Aston speculation. I *entirely agree with you*. Good reasons must perforce give place to better."